

Second draft

(1)

BREAD, BLOOD AND FIRE.
I Cor. 10: 16-17; Acts 2:2-4

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." (I Cor. 10:15-17)

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.." (Acts 2:2-4)

I must confess that I am having second thoughts about ~~my~~^{the} sermon title ^{for this morning}.
~~I have given to this meditation~~
~~on these two passages.~~ "Bread, Blood and Fire" looks a bit out of place in

a church bulletin. It sounds more like a crime-and-violence detective story ^{better} ~~more~~ suited for reading ~~only~~ on ~~long~~ eleven-hour flights from Hong Kong to Seatac ~~such as the one we have just survived~~, than for a communion service.

^{I know} It is over-dramatic, ~~can't~~^{I know} it. But it ~~does~~^{does} fit the one day of the church year when a communion service coincides with Pentecost Sunday. The bread and the blood are the loaf and the cup of the Lord's Supper. And the fire, of course, is for Pentecost. The connection, ^{too} is ~~completely~~ appropriate, for though we cannot be sure, it is quite possible that when the apostles ~~had~~ "gathered together in one place" that day, as Luke describes the ^{setting for Pentecost, - it's possible that had} occasion, they ~~had~~ came together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, as ^{Jesus} he had instructed them to do. And it was there that the fire fell, and they felt take power of the Spirit.

But whether they were gathered around the table that day or not, the bread and the blood and the fire belong together in the Christian life, not just then, and not just this Sunday, but every day if we would truly follow Jesus.

Nevertheless there is something about communion services ~~like this~~, and especially about Pentecost, that seems to make sober, orderly

Presbyterians like us a little uncomfortable. It may be the air of mystery and ancient magic ^{with which the Middle Ages treated} ~~that seems to surround~~ the elements, ^{of} the bread and wine, ~~but which~~ ^{is quite} a way of which ~~may be~~ foreign to our simpler Puritan taste. It may be the extravagant emotions of Pentecostal ^{being} ~~fire~~ ^{ecstasy} that appear out of place in the ~~austere~~ ^{order} rational theological ~~pace~~ of a Reformed service of worship. Presbyterians don't go to extremes. We're not as mystically sacramentarian as Catholics at mass. Our worship centers ^{more} about preaching the Word, not celebrating a miracle. And we don't break out of our proper, three-point sermons into speaking in tongues like Pentecostals;--at least not very often.

And yet.. And yet like the apostles we do receive the bread and ^{we} drink ^{of the cup} of the wine at every communion service; ^{we have even placed} and ~~there are~~ two tongues of the pentecostal fire burning on either side of the cross in the official seal of our own Presbyterian church. Common sense Presbyterians we may be, but we dare not neglect the bread, and the blood and the fire. They are the very essence of the spiritual life and power of the Christian faith.

I. First the BREAD. That is what we receive first at every communion service. The bread is the sign and ^{seal} ~~secret~~ of our Christian unity in Christ. Paul uses a ~~dramatic~~ paradox to make ^{the} ~~his~~ point. The one loaf, ~~he~~ ^{Paul} reminds ^{his} the quarreling Corinthians, means that ^{just} as the Body of Christ is one body, so also the Church is one. Not Peter against Paul, but all one in Jesus Christ. ^{today we} ~~We~~ Still come today in many parts, we Christians -- Catholics, Lutherans, ^{Baptists} Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals--but we all partake of ^{the} one loaf; we are one Body, one Church, around the world. From Korea to Puyallup and from China to to the ends of the earth, "one great fellowship of ~~love~~ around the whole wide world."

But how shamefully, in actual practice, we Christians reverse that Biblical pattern. The loaf of bread is given to remind us of how Jesus gave his body to be broken; that we might be made whole ^{and unbroken} ~~and one in Him~~; but we take his Body, the Church, and as John Calvin wrote long ago, we quarrel and split and thereby we tear Christ's body apart and crucify him all over again.

Eileen and I have just returned from a visit to Korea and China. Both are wonderfully encouraging examples of churches alive and growing despite great persecutions. In Korea, only a few miles from the North Korean communist border, we attended a down-town Presbyterian church started by refugees fleeing from the north only 43 years ago with 27 members which now in that one congregation has fifty or sixty thousand members. I'm not talking about a Baptist church; I'm talking about a Presbyterian church with over fifty thousand members. Some say there are now more Presbyterians in ^{the} Korea than there are in ^{the whole United States} ~~America~~.

And then there is China. When the Chinese communists arrested me and threw me out of the country forty years ago, they told me that once they got rid of the foreign missionaries, the Chinese church would wither away and disappear, But what has actually happened is that it is communism which is withering away, not Christianity, and the Chinese church is stronger than ever. When I left ~~China~~ back in 1951 we could count only about 3 million Christians in China. Today, in spite of all the communists could do to ^{try and} wipe them out, there are probably ten times as many Chinese Christians as ^{when} ~~before~~ the ^{anti-Christian} revolution ^{started}. Then 3 million; today at least 30 million.

But there is another side that must be told. What the communists could not do to the church ^{the} from outside; Christians may unwittingly be

doing to themselves from the inside, if they forget the lesson of the loaf of bread on the Lord's Table.. The greatest danger facing Chinese Christianity today is not communism, but Christian disunity. It has taken the form of a ~~growing~~^{crippling} split in the ~~Chinese~~ church which sets the fast-growing "house churches" of ~~the~~ secret believers against what are called the "open churches" of the government-approved "three-self movement". The "house churches" are the ~~Christian~~ cell groups who left their church buildings ~~and met~~^{to meet} quietly in ~~their~~^{private} homes, believing that this was the only way ~~to~~^{they could} survive under an anti-Christian dictatorship without compromising their faith and practice. The "three-self", open churches, on the other hand, felt it was equally important to keep some visible Christian presence alive in communist China as an open witness ^{to the faith.} They succeeded, ~~and won~~^{in winning} government ~~recognition and~~ acceptance, but only at the cost of ~~some~~ negotiated compromises with the communist regime. Both had good reasons for what they did, But the result is a divided church in China. It is no longer "one loaf", and the Body of Christ is torn again.

In Korea, the context is different, but the splits are even more obvious and abrasive. Presbyterians, for example, are by far the largest Christian group -- three times as large as the Korean Catholic church--but they are so divided that some people call them the "Split P's (P for Presbyterian). Where else in the world will you find a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ Presbyterian Church, and Jesus isn't talking to Christ.

"Is Christ divided?" Paul asked the Corinthians. No. There is only one loaf at communion. How then can Chkristians partake of the bread of ~~four~~ union in Christ, yet continue to betray that unity by our quarrels and divisions? Is there any hope? Yes, ~~The hope, however,~~^{but not in the unity. The hope} is in the blood, ~~strange~~

strange though that may sound to modern ears. For it is blood that gives life to the body. But the blood I'm speaking of is not ours but Christ's, That's what the cross is all about. It's not theater, It's salvation. And it is our only real hope for unity both in the church and in the world.

So the second element is

as a symbol of the blood of Christ.

II. THE BLOOD. After the bread, we receive the wine, ~~the~~ cup. "This cup", said Jesus, "is the new covenant in my blood. Drink, ye all, of it." If the loaf of bread is the sign of our unity in Christ, the cup of red wine is a reminder that it is not by our strength that Christian unity can be restored; that comes only through the finished work of Christ on the cross. Again Paul uses paradox to describe it. "Through Him [Christ]", Paul wrote to the Colossians, "[God] reconciled to ;himself ;all ;things..., making peace by the blood of the cross." Peace through the blood; peace through death. How great was the price he paid for our salvation. How much he suffered that we might be reconciled with God and restored to fellowship with each other. The old hymn says it best:

"See, from his head, his hands, his feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down; Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small. Love so amazing so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

I learned more about what that means from a group of Korean Christians at a communion service I attended not long after the Korea War, than from any other I have ever been in. A friend asked me to help him serve communion in a village which had been almost completely destroyed when MacArthur landed at Inchon and advanced on communist-held Seoul. His way was blocked there at Haengju by the retreating enemy. So the Americans wheeled up their big guns to blast their way through. I have learned since then that the percussive effect of an artillery blast is much more powerful if the shells are dropped all at one time on an object than if the same number land only one at a time. That was what happened to Haengju. The

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great guns were trained in unison on the village, and the electric timers pushed off the deadly missiles in one great blinding explosion that completely wiped out the tiny hamlet. Every home was destroyed. 70 of the 100 houses were the homes of Christians. Only the little church, partly protected by a small hill, was left standing, and it still bore the scars of the disaster.

As we came to the words of invitation to the Lord's Supper, I noticed that many in the congregation were weeping, and I wondered if they were remembering the terrors of that dreadful day when they lost their homes and so many loved ones. I even wondered if they resented our American presence, missionaries though we were, since it was American guns which had destroyed their village. But as I watched them, and listened to their murmured prayers, I heard only thanksgiving for their liberation, and suddenly realized that the tears were not for themselves, but for how much Jesus had suffered for them on the cross. That was what they were remembering. It was his great love that so moved them. And I felt a stab of guilt thinking how often I have come without tears to communion, thinking how often my thoughts have been more of myself than of Jesus. But here were my brothers and sisters in Christ, Korean Christians, who came to communion as Jesus commanded, to remember Him. "This do in remembrance of me".

Our hymns don't sing much any more about the blood of Christ, do they. And I don't find many Presbyterians here weeping in repentance for the sins that sent Jesus to the cross. Perhaps we have so much, and share so little with those who have less, and sacrifice almost nothing for Him who suffered for us, that we prefer not to be reminded of the blood. If so, it is not too late to drink again today of the cup, and the "the new covenant in his blood" which the cup represents holds the promise that. And when we come to the table in honest repentance, the cup of suffering becomes a cup of blessing, and sorrow turns to joy, and joy brings hope and power.

III. The last of today's three points is FIRE. Bread, Blood, and Fire. At Pentecost, after the bread and the wine, came the fire. It stands for power, the power of the Spirit. Again I learned a lesson from Korea's Christians. They don't stay in church weeping over their sins after the communion service. They have repented of their sins and are forgiven. So they get up, sing a hymn, and go out to face life in the power of the Spirit. [I watched them at Haengju. They were no longer weeping. They were smiling and happy, getting ready for house to house visitation among their non-Christian friends in the village, ~~in the afternoon~~. They wanted to talk about the service, and about the foreigners who had come for communion, and in a low-key friendly way ^{they wanted to ask if they had enough to eat, and what kinds of problems were} reminisce ^{about} now ^{after the war} they had pulled their lives back together ~~after the tragedy~~ with the new-found strength of their Christian faith. It was all done so naturally, but it was changing the spirit of the whole village. Changing it from self-pity to a determination to do something about rebuilding after the destruction of the war. Multiply that about a thousand times--for the churches have been growing at four times the growth-rate of the population

as a whole -- and you find at least one significant factor in the amazing recovery of South Korea after the war. An isolated, backward economic basket case has become one of the modern miracles of the third world. A demoralized, ravaged nation managed to turn utter poverty into the fastest growing export economy in the world. They call it one of the four "little tigers", along with Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore--fast catching up to the "big tiger", Japan, and furnishing such an incredible contrast to communist North Korea; which is still a basket-case, that Asia lost faith in communism even before Eastern Europe. It is hardly recognizable as the same country in which my father landed just a hundred years ago this year, in 1890. If anyone had told me when I was growing up there as a boy that that country of ox-carts and open sewers would ;one day be exporting automobiles to an America which invented the motor car, I would have thought they were out of their minds.

But the more important change, to my mind has been the spiritual. The Korean church is far from perfect. I have already mentioned its sad divisions. But when my father landed there were only two little Protestant churches in all Korea, north and south. Today there are six thousand Protestant churches in the city of Seoul alone.

What made the Korean church grow? They asked my father that at the 50th anniversary of Protestant missions in Korea, in 1934. There are many reasons--good missionary methods, Korean openness to the gospel, ^{daily prayers,} Christian support of the Korean independence movement, ^{service to the poor,} the decline of the old religions, and many more. But my father chose to emphasize only two. "The church has grown," he said, "because for the last fifty years we have held up before the people the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit has done the rest." ~~As at Pentecost, the power of the Spirit is always the secret of life and power in the church.~~ That's what made the church grow in Korea.

rest." That's what made the church grow in Korea.

Bread, blood, and fire--the three elements. And each raises a final, closing question for us right here. The loaf of bread is the unity of the church, the body of Christ. We sing, "They will know we are Christians by our love". Will they? Will they really?

The blood is the saving work of Christ. And we sing "Were you there when they nailed him to the cross". Were you? Then what difference has it made in the way you live?

The fire is the power of the Spirit. And we sing, "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me". Then where has all the power gone?

Those are the questions I ask myself when I come to communion, in a Presbyterian church, on a Pentecost Sunday.

-- Samuel Hugh Moffett

Puyallup, Washington

June 2, 1990

reasons--good missionary methods, Korean openness to the gospel, Christian support of the Korean independence movement, the decline of the old religions, and many more. But my father chose to emphasize only two. "The church has grown," he said, "because for the last fifty years we have held up before the people the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit has done the

First Draft

It's good to be back home in Puyallup. This is our week for communion, - just to three when I was born and where Eileen and I were married; then to Hong Kong and across the border into Communist China which was my incomplete home for two years during the May revolution - but now ~~back~~ the piece of beauty of my home and family here in the lovely Puyallup - and tomorrow back home to 1 - color. It is a special privilege to be in the pulpit today with your pastor. So let me read

BREAD, BLOOD AND FIRE.

I Cor. 10: 16-17; Acts 2:2-4

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." (I Cor. 10:15-17)

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.."

(Acts 2:2-4)

Those two passages of Scripture, one from Paul's first

letter to the Corinthians, and the other from the Book of

Acts, come together most appropriately on a day like this

when a communion Sunday falls on Pentecost Sunday. For it

is quite possible that the apostles had "gathered together

in one place", as Luke describes that first Pentecost, to

celebrate the Lord's Supper ~~(and obey the Lord's command to "do~~

~~this in remembrance of me",]~~ when the fire fell and they felt

the power of the Spirit. But whether they were gathered

around the table that day or not, the bread and the blood

and the fire, ~~these three symbols belong together,~~ not just

today, but all through our lives if we would be true

followers of Jesus..

only a 11 hour flight to from HK to Seattle & back - the one we just survived this week. It may be one - drinks, time - but it does take one day of the old year - a communion falls on Pentecost Sunday. The Lord's Supper, and the fire, of course are for Pentecost. The connection is completely appropriate. We cannot be sure, but it is possible that, as Luke describes the occasion, they had come together to celebrate the Supper, and it was then that the fire fell and they felt the power of the Spirit.

My pastor is 2 pages of Scripture, not

and I must confess that I'm having second thoughts about my sermon for the "Bread, Blood and Fire" looks a bit like a crime & reward story.

belong together

not just

Christians

Nevertheless,

But there is something about the communion service and

about Pentecost that ^{at times} makes sober, orderly Presbyterians like

us a little uncomfortable. ^{It may be that the} ~~There is so much~~ mystery and ^{of the nature of the elements, the bread and wine, and}

^{the ancient flavor of the} ~~liturgy in the sacrament~~ of the Lord's supper, ^{are too much to our simpler Puritan tastes, and as for the Pentecostal fire} and so much

~~nervous tension in the tongues of fire~~ at Pentecost that is quite

^{not quite in place in the} ~~don't quite fit~~ the austere, rational; theological pace of a

Reformed service of worship. ^{Presbyterians} ~~We~~ don't go for extremes.

We're not as mystically sacramentarian ^{as Catholics} about the Lord's

Supper ^{as} ~~as Catholics at mass~~. Symbols, yes, -- the bread and

the wine, ^{are symbols, yes,} ~~But not~~ miracles. ^{Our worship centers about people, the Word of God, and the Spirit.} ~~We're more comfortable~~

~~preaching sermons or listening to them.~~ And we don't break

out of our proper, three-point sermons into speaking in

tongues like Pentecostals; -- at least not very often.

(And yet.. And yet, like the apostles we do receive the bread

and drink the wine liturgically at every communion service;

and there are two tongues of the pentecostal fire burning on

either side of the cross in the official seal of our own

Presbyterian church. Common sense Presbyterians we may be,

but we dare not neglect the bread, and the blood and the fire. They are the ^{basic elements} ~~very~~ essence of the spiritual life and power of the Christian ~~faith~~. ^{ch. 1}

I. First the BREAD. That is what we receive first at every communion service. The bread is the sign ^{a) loaf} ~~and secret~~ of our Christian unity in Christ. ^{11r} One loaf, Paul reminds ^{1st Cor. 10:17,} ~~Not Paul or it is,~~ but all are in Jesus Christ. ^{his} ~~the~~ quarreling Corinthians, means one Body, one Church. [^] We still come in many parts, ^{today} we Christians--Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals--~~so many parts~~, but when we all partake ^{the} of one loaf; we are one Body, one Church, ~~in all and the world,~~ Christ who is the only Head of the Church, and the Bread of life. ^{from Greece & Phylipp, to China & the ends of the earth.}

^{in our feet} Paul uses a dramatic paradox to make his point. The broken bread at the Lord's Supper, is the sign of the unbroken unity of the Christian church. [^] But how shamefully,

in actual practice, we Christians reverse that Biblical pattern. The loaf of bread is ^{given us as a reminder that} ~~given to remind us of how~~ Jesus gave his body to be broken ^{so} that we might be made

~~not included~~ But ~~the bread~~
whole, and one in Him; but we take his Body, the Church,
which the bread represents, and break it again into pieces.

As Calvin wrote long ago, every time we quarrel and split
the church, we tear Christ's body apart and crucify Him
again.

Eileen and I have just returned from a visit to Korea
and to China. Both are wonderfully encouraging examples of churches
~~how the church is~~ alive, and growing by leaps and bounds ^{near the four percent in}
~~around the world.~~ ^{only a few miles from the N. Korea com. border,} In Korea we attended a down-town
Presbyterian church, ^{with a} ~~one~~ congregation ^{of} ~~with~~ fifty or sixty
thousand members. I'm not talking about a Baptist church;
I'm talking about a Presbyterian church with over fifty
thousand members, and that is only one congregation in a
city with more than six thousand Protestant churches. Some
say there are ^{more} ~~now~~ Presbyterians in Korea than ^{are} ~~there~~ in
America. ^{Communist} And then there is ^{China}. When the ^{they} arrested me
and threw me out ~~of China~~ forty years ago, they told me that
once the missionaries were gone ^{the} Chinese church would wither

and disappear. No more ~~know~~ in a communist state.
 away. But what has withered away in China is not
 Christianity but communism. ^{Before the} ~~When I left~~ ^{could} we counted only
 about 3 million ^{Chinese} Christians in ~~China~~ ^{the country}. Today, in spite of all
 the communists could do to destroy the church, ~~they say~~
 there are probably ten times as many Christians as before
 the revolution. Then 3 million; today at least 30 million.

But there is another side that must be told. What the
 communists could not do to the church from outside;

Christians ^{can} ~~may~~ do to themselves from the inside. ^{When they forget the lesson of the ~~last~~ 171 years.} The

greatest danger facing Chinese Christianity today is not
 communism, but a growing ^{split in the national church there. The home} ~~polarization which sets the~~ ^{churches of the secret Christians who went underground during the persecutions, apart from the ones what are called the 3-self churches of the "open churches".}

~~fast-growing~~ ^{The} "house churches" ~~of the secret, underground~~
 feel that they could not survive under an anti-Christian dictatorship without being ^{to compromise their faith of practice}
~~Christian communities that refused to compromise with an~~

~~atheistic, anti-Christian dictatorship. on the one hand, and,~~
~~on the other, The "Three-Self Churches" which in a brave~~
^{on the other hand, felt it was equally important to keep some}

~~attempt to retain a visible Christian presence~~ ^{alone} in communist
 China, ^{and} ~~remained~~ ^{remained} above ground, ~~and survived,~~ but only at the

cost of some negotiated compromises with the ~~communists~~ ^{government}. Both
 had good reasons for what they did, but the result is an
 incomplete ~~at present~~ ^{division} in Christ's Body. The church is not
 one. It is divided, and the Body of Christ is not "one loaf."

In Korea, the context is different, but the splits are even more obvious and abrasive. ^{a. by for the largest church group, 3 times as large as others, but} Presbyterians are so divided ^{apart each other} that some

~~others~~ call them the "Split P's (P for Presbyterian). Where else in the world will you find a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ

Presbyterian Church, and Jesus isn't talking to Christ.

Is Christ divided?, Paul asked the Cor. No, ~~there is only one loaf at comm., the Body of Xt.~~

How can we come to communion, ~~and take the bread, all of us~~ ^{together} and take the bread, ~~and then go out to destroy our unity in Xt~~ ^{from the "one loaf" that is the one body, the one, world-wide}

~~Church of the Lord Jesus Christ which he made whole by his sacrifice on the cross, how can we eat of that bread of Christian unity, and destroy its unity by our quarrels and divisions?~~

II. THE BLOOD. After the bread, we receive the wine, the cup.

This ~~cup~~ is the new covenant in my blood, said Jesus. If the loaf of bread is the sign of our unity in Christ, the cup of red wine is a reminder of how great was the price ^{Christ} ~~he~~ paid for our salvation and ~~to our~~ ^{unity} ~~union~~ with ^{him} ~~to each other.~~ ^{or with} ~~make us one~~

"Through Him", wrote Paul to the Colossians, " [God] reconcile[s] to himself all things...making peace by the blood of his

cross." Again Paul uses paradox, peace through the blood, peace through death. The old hymn says it best: "See, from his head

slat

"See, from his head, his hands, his feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down; Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small. Love so amazing so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

I learned more about what that means from a communion service I attended in Korea, just after the Korea War, than from any other ^{Korean Church, at} ^{worship service} I have ever been in. My friend, Otto DeCamp, asked me to go with him and help serve communion in a village which had been almost completely destroyed when MacArthur landed at Inchon and advanced ^{to liberate} on communist-held Seoul. His way ^{from the port to the capital} was blocked by ~~an~~ ^{the} enemy force ^{at this village, Haengju} ~~which had seized and fortified the village~~. So the Americans wheeled up their big guns to blast their way through. I have learned since that the perussive effect of an artillery blast is much more powerful if the shells are dropped all at one time on an object than if the same number land only one at a time. That was what happened to Haengju. The great guns were trained in a pattern on the village, and the electric timers pushed off the deadly missiles in one great blinding explosion that completely wiped out the tiny hamlet. Every home was destroyed, ~~and~~ 70 of the 100 little houses were the homes of Christians. Only the ⁱⁿ little church, ^{partly protected by a small hill,} ~~back in a little depression~~ was left standing, and it still bore the scars of the disaster.

As we came to the words of invitation to the Lord's Supper, I noticed that many in the congregation were weeping, and I wondered if they were remembering the terrors of that dreadful day when they lost homes loved ones in the war so recently past. I even wondered if they resented our American

presence, missionaries though we were, since it was ~~our~~ American guns which had destroyed their village. But as I watched them, and listened to their murmured

he wrote to the Colossians, " [God] reconcile[s] to himself all things...making peace by the blood of his cross." Peace through the blood, peace through death, a costly, costly peace. The old hymn says it best:

murmured prayers, I realized suddenly that what they were remembering was not their loss, but the suffering of Jesus on the cross. It was what in his great love he had done for them that so moved them, and I felt a stab of guilt, ^{think} for how often I had come without tears to communion, thinking more of myself than of Jesus. They had come to communion, as Jesus commanded, to remember Him. "This do in remembrance of me".

We don't sing much any more in our hymns about the blood of Christ, do we. And I don't find many of Presbyterians in America weeping in repentance and remembrance at the Lord's Supper. Perhaps we have so much, and suffer so little for Jesus Jesus, that we have forgotten how he suffered for us. If so, drink now again of the cup which is 'the new covenant in his blood, remembering how he said, "This do in remembrance of me." And the cup will then no longer need to remind us of blood, but will become "the cup of blessing" to our hearts.

III. And POWER. A cup of blessing ^{in a cup} and of power. Today ~~is~~ our communion service ^{comes} at Pentecost, and after the bread and the wine, ^{comes} the fire, the power. Again I learned a lesson from Korea's Christians.

They don't stay there in chch weeping over their sins at the Lord's Supper. They get up, repent at prayer and church, and get on with ~~the rest of their lives in the power of the Spirit.~~ ^{After the comm. service they are} One example is the "rice of love" movement in Korea. We all know of Jesus as

the "bread of life", but Koreans, to whom rice is more important than bread, have invented a new term to describe a movement away from their church schisms and controversies, and toward Christian renewal and love.

Hangju, they stopped weeping, sang a hymn, and went out to tell their non-Christian friends in the villages, in a friendly, low-key way, about the sense, and why we were there, and what it was all about, and how after the tragedy they had found the strength and joy to go on living, and rebuild their homes and live up the slope. ~~It was during~~ They were chosen to do special about the destruction of the village.

Ever since, Christians have been growing so fast in Korea — at five times the rate of growth of the population as a whole, — that they have been an essential factor in the amazing recovery of South Korea from an isolated, backward, economic basket case into one of the modern miracles of our day — the transformation of a little, divided, ravaged nation, into the fastest growing export economy over the past 20 years of any country in the world. S. Korea is one of what they call one of the "four little tigers" — ~~S. Korea~~ Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and S. Korea — fast catching up to the "big Asian tiger", Japan, — and such a contrast to Communist N. Korea which is still an economic basket case, that Asia began to lose faith in Communism even before Eastern Europe. It is hardly recognizable as the same country in which my father led as a pioneer mission just a hundred years ago this year. If anyone had told me, when I was growing up there as a boy, that that country of ox-carts and poor farmers would one day be exporting automobiles to America, which imported them, I would have thought they were out of their minds.

But the more important change, to my mind, is the growth spiritual. My father was stoned in the streets when he tried to preach the gospel in the forbidden interior. When we left Korea ten years ago, the president himself asked us to come and see him, and asked us theological questions. ~~They asked for~~ When father led, there were only 2 little Prot. churches in the whole country. Today, there are 6 there in the city of Seoul alone.

And why? It is because, like those Christians in Haengju, after the bread and the blood, ~~they~~ ^{Korea's churches} put the fire, the flame of the Spirit which ^{but} changed their ~~by~~ lives, but kept them ^{begin to} closed their country. Now 30 out of every 100 Koreans is a Christian, and most of them (I'm a little too proud of this) — most of them are Presbyterians, and Presbyterians take the fire of the Spirit and put it to work. They ~~don't~~ ^{don't} concentrate on tongues, though they don't deny that too is Biblical. They'd rather get to work in homes and in service.

And being ~~the~~ Koreans, to whom rice is even more important than bread — when they leave the common service

~~and get out in the streets~~

~~they talk more and~~

they ^{have} added to their evangelistic witness to Christ, "the Bread of life", a service ministry to the poor which they call "the Rice of love" - taking from their own surplus of rice which is now more than Korea needs for itself, and collecting it, and distributing it to the poor, many of whom still can't afford rice and are still hungry, - and in this act of selfless service, the Korean churches are beginning again to find a unity in Christ which can heal their divisions.

Bread, blood & fire. This is what communion on Pentecost Sunday means to us.

The bread is the body of Christ who calls us together
in ~~the~~ one great fellowship of love and the world.
Why can't we show we are Christians by our love.

The wine is the blood of Christ, which was shed
for us and our salvation ~~on the cross~~ by his sacrifice of
on the cross. Why can't we show we are his disciples
by ~~the~~ ^{we have so much} we gave up his life for us all. Why can't
we show we are Christians by the way we share
what we have with others.

The fire is the power of the Spirit for us in
our Christian witness and ~~service~~ mission to the ends
of the world. Why can't we show we are
Christians by ~~the way~~ we tell the whole world ^{about}
Jesus, our Lord and our Saviour. the good news about
Jesus, who died and rose again ~~in power~~ for us.

~~That is what communion on Pentecost Sunday is~~
~~all about.~~

If so, it is not too late to drink again today ; of the cup which is 'the new covenant in his blood. And when we drink in honest repentance, the cup of suffering becomes a cup of blessing, and sorrow turns to joy, and joy brings hope and power.

III. The last of today's three ^{elements} ~~points~~ is FIRE. ^{Bread, Blood & Fire.} At Pentecost, after the bread and the wine, came the fire.

One example is the "rice of love" movement in Korea. We all know of Jesus as the "bread of life", but Koreans, to whom rice is more important than bread, have invented a new term to describe a movement away from their church schisms and controversies, and toward Christian renewal and love.